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Without this man the history of Boston would be less worthy than it is ; and his uplifting influence reached far over the nation and beyond the sea.

J. P. QUINCY.

A Life of Francis Parkman. By CHARLES HAIGHT FARNHAM.
(Boston : Little, Brown, and Company. 1900. Pp. xv, 394.)

AT first glance, Mr. Farnham's *Life of Francis Parkman* must be disturbing to those who knew how slight was Parkman's patience with the vagaries of New England philosophy. When in the authorized biography of such a man you find a whole section devoted to what the table of contents calls his "spiritual growth," and when this section is formally preceded by others on the man "as seen in his works," and on his "preparation," you half dread to read, fearing lest you shall find the outlines of an heroic life weakened and distorted by sentimentality. This superficial aspect of Mr. Farnham's book deserves remark, because its very superficiality makes it salient. In truth it is almost the only fault of a work which should come to be recognized as a masterpiece of literary portraiture.

The merit of this work is the more unusual if, as the terms of its plan suggest, Mr. Farnham is temperamentally disposed to sympathize with Transcendentalism, and with Reform, and with whatever else tended romantically and ardently to disintegrate that sturdy old New England in whose later days Parkman found his own sympathies increasingly conservative. But, after all, Mr. Farnham shows qualities which could counterbalance any temperamental bias. In the first place, he has an exceptional power of placing himself in cordial sympathy with his immediate subject ; in the second, he has a still more exceptional power of seeking only to perceive the truth and to set it forth truthfully. From this results a style at once unobtrusive and efficient. You are rarely aware of Mr. Farnham's phrasing ; you are never at a loss to understand what he means. From beginning to end of his book you are in the presence of the remarkable personality which this work will keep alive for those who care to know it.

The vividness of Mr. Farnham's portrait any one must feel. To appreciate its fidelity one must perhaps have had the happiness to know Parkman with some approach to familiarity. Except in its more personal aspects his life was uneventful. Its incidents were only those of a ceaseless struggle with physical and mental obstacles which would have proved fatal to almost any courage but his. The historical work which he accomplished every one knows. What can truly be known only to the comparatively few who chanced to meet him in his later years is the strong, uncompromising, unmistakable individuality of his character. Amid the same persistent braveries which brought into being the masterpieces of our historical literature, this grew to its ripeness. One's memory of Parkman can never be confused with any other ; it is at once human and heroic, affectionate and inspiring. Above all, it is distinct and ineffaceable.

The deepest merit of Mr. Farnham's book, then, is one which only those who knew and cared for Parkman can fully understand. Without violation of that fine reticence which was so deeply inbred in Parkman, Mr. Farnham has given us an unfaltering study of his personality. As you read it, you feel a growing sense that you are once more in the presence of the man, in his habit, as he lived. The hours which you pass with this book are like renewed ones with the friend whose memory it will help to preserve. You lay it down with a feeling of grave, tender content. The future, if it will, may know more than Parkman's work; it may know Parkman, too.

BARRETT WENDELL.

A History of Banking in the United States. By the late JOHN JAY KNOX, assisted by a corps of financial writers in the various States. The entire work carefully revised and brought up to date by BRADFORD RHODES, editor of the *Bankers' Magazine*, and ELMER H. YOUNGMAN, associate editor. (New York: Bradford Rhodes and Co. 1900. Pp. xxii, 880.)

THE academic world of patient investigation and reflective analysis as well as the more active world of political administration and finance has been greatly indebted in the past to Mr. Knox for his contributions to the history of government monetary issues and banking institutions,—contributions characterized by careful inquiry, candid spirit and lucid statement. Mr. Knox was Deputy Comptroller and Comptroller of the Currency from 1867 to 1884, during which period the national banking system was fiercely assailed. Thus he enjoyed abundant opportunities for acquiring information not only through the archives of the office, but also through a large and intimate acquaintance with bankers throughout the country. During this long period of service, he set a praiseworthy example as a government official, in incorporating into his annual reports the results of historical research. He thus made his documents of permanent value to the student. The reports of 1875 and 1876 are notable illustrations. The researches of Mr. Knox led him in two directions,—one into the history of government treasury notes, and the other into that of the origin and development of banking institutions in the United States. The results of the first of these studies were published in 1884 in the volume entitled *United States Notes*. That book met with general approval, and has since passed through several editions. Although compact in its compass, it contains the essential facts, and presents them in a style appropriate to the scheme adopted by the author. The second task Mr. Knox did not live to complete. It was far more difficult to accomplish than the former, for it demanded a separate banking study for each of the states; and as there has been a great variety of systems with no uniform development, and as in many cases there are few public documents which can be relied upon for information, the gathering of the material was naturally slow and perplexing. Mr. Knox left